



EXPLORATIONS

EXPLORATIONS



CONTENTS

Editor: MARSHALL MCLUHAN

Power: Nude or Naked

SHEILA WATSON

The Visual Unseen

HARLEY W. PARKER

POWER: NUDE OR NAKED

SHEILA WATSON, *Department of English, University of Alberta*

At the beginning of *Sartor Resartus* the editor of Teufelsdröckh's papers remarks with surprise "that hitherto little or nothing of fundamental character, whether in the way of Philosophy or History, has been written on the subject of Clothes." Clothes, he remarks after dismissing the "owl's-glance" of some "broken-winged" thinkers into this obscure region, have been regarded "as a property not an accident, as quite natural and spontaneous, like the leaves of trees, like the plumage of birds." Although man's whole life and environment, including every fibre of his body and soul, have been "probed, dissected, distilled, desiccated, and scientifically decomposed," man has "figured tacitly as a *Clothed Animal*; whereas he is by nature a *Naked Animal*; and only in certain circumstances by purpose and device, masks himself in Clothes."

Montaigne had argued as much in *The Apology for Raymond Sebond*. Here in answer to the Epicurean complaint that man is the only animal abandoned naked on the naked earth with nothing to cover him except the spoils of others Montaigne observes that man's skin is as adequately provided with endurance as the animal's. Only custom makes impossible a condition which is not impossible in itself. In his essay "Of the Custom of Wearing Clothes," he remarks, too, that man, like the animal, is "furnished with the exact amount of thread and needle required to maintain his being." "We have," he says, "extinguished our means by borrowed means as artificial light extinguishes the light of day." Wherever man turns to find what is *natural* some "barrier of custom"—or costume—blocks all approaches. Only that life which the Greeks called *zoe* in opposition to "characterized existence" which they called *bios* appears to him as *natural*.

Although Montaigne suggests that costume can destroy what it invests and that consciousness is modified by the images which the mind projects his speculation

is limited by secular prudence. He is not haunted by the thought of a radical mutation of the natural human integument as Wyndham Lewis is when he speaks nostalgically in an environment subject to the hazard of atomic fission about the warmth and resilience which makes "skins . . . so high class a covering for man to have."

Swift, in what Sir Kenneth Clark calls his "famous defense of Delusion," is closer in his attitude to Lewis than he is to Carlyle, who depends for the literal level of his analogy on the anatomists. "Last Week," Swift writes in "A Digression on Madness," "I saw a Woman *flay'd*, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her Person for the worse." Immediately, too, he amplifies his point: "Yesterday I ordered the Carcass of a Beau to be stript in my presence; when we were all amazed to find so many unexpected Faults under one suit of Clothes." His reminder is addressed to a world which is becoming in its reaction almost wholly visual.

Sir Kenneth, who defines the nude in opposition to the naked as "a form of art" and again as "the most complete example of the transmutation of matter into form" says that the classical ideal "has been more protective than any drapery; whereas the shape of the Gothic body, which suggests that it was normally clothed gave it the impropriety of a secret." He is repelled by the unclothed Gothic figures because they remind him of roots and bulbs. They suggest the slow biologic groping that makes bulbs shamefully "baggy, scraggy, and indeterminate." The body of Eve on the lintel of a door from Autun, Sir Kenneth says, is represented as "an unfortunate accident of the human condition, and instead of being presented as the summit of visual experience, is made to go on all fours with ornamental leaves and fabulous animals." There is no doubt that Sir Kenneth prefers the body clothed, at least visually, in a garment which he calls the nude.

Because of his conviction, however, that drapery is a sign of "the inhibition which oppresses all but the most backward people" he is unable to develop his initial intuition that the formal nude to which he is attracted is a ritual type which reconciles several contrary states. So sure is he that clothes are a mask which conceals and destroys he fails to take into account even the iconographic tradition in which, according to Edgar Wind, "a triad of naked figures" representing the three Graces replaced a triad of clothed figures as a relatively late invention in the tradition which Sir Kenneth himself approves. Only prudery Sir Kenneth thinks could have invented the figures as they appear clothed in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance—especially in the persons of "three nervous ladies hiding behind a blanket."

The conviction that his clothing is a "false Covering" is Gulliver's last step towards misanthropy and total madness. For him the physical truth of the

Yahoo becomes the naked iconoclastic truth which finally transforms the world into a *peau de chagrin*. In the Yahoo Gulliver sees with outraged clarity the “wrinkles, pouches, and small imperfections” which Sir Kenneth Clark, thinking sadly of the artist’s model, says cannot be made into art by direct transcription — “like a tiger or a snowy landscape.”

When Gulliver refuses to strip himself completely his Houyhnhnm master rebukes him for his prudery. The Grey Horse, Gulliver says, “could not understand why Nature should teach us to conceal what Nature has given.” With a physical shudder, however, Gulliver demonstrates that his clothing protects him by conserving his energy. Eric Neumann’s comment on the cultural symbols of protection connected with the cult of the Great Mother suggests that Gulliver’s reaction is more primitive in its simplicity than the Houyhnhnm’s rational naturalism. Such covering as shirt, dress, coat, veil, and finally shield, Neumann says, are connected with the protective image of the “Mother pot.” In German, he goes on to say, “words as *Höle*, ‘cave’; . . . *hohl*, ‘hollow’; *Halle*, ‘hall’; *Hülle*, ‘covering’; *Hülse*, ‘husk’ or ‘pod’; and *Helm*, ‘helmet’ derive from the root *hel*, ‘shelter’.

There is more than a superficial connection between Wyndham Lewis’s suggestion that he “preferred a helmet to a head of hair” and his final meditation on the function of skin. Writing about the royal headgear of Sumer and Egypt Rachel Levy observes, “The imposition of the Crown was not the creative act of the coronation ceremonies in Egypt and elsewhere . . . Only after his rebirth as God, by the ancient and universal rites, can the magic enclosure protect his head. The lofty cone of the Double Crown is definitely shown to be a cavern-form of the Mother Goddess who shelters him when new-born in death.”

Shakespeare, as Ernst Kantorowicz points out in his discussion of *King Richard II*, explores not only the complex reactions of the body of flesh which Richard speaks of as walling about life, but also the constructs by which men contract, compound, control, or extend their power. One of the objects on which he particularly dwells is the physical symbol which hedges the corporate power of the king. The Fool in *King Lear*, who has much to say about Lear’s divesting, speaks from the centre of iconographically ordered experience when, pointing to Lear, he remarks to Goneril, who appears before Lear wearing an insubstantial but menacing “frontlet,” “That’s a sheal’d peascod.”

Swift moves consciously in the same labyrinths of thought. Because he is aware of the way in which the ritual of the cave finds expression he is less disposed than some of his contemporaries to meditate on its idols or to engage in a wholesale breaking of what Cowley in his ode “To the Royal Society” stigmatizes as “old and empty Pitchers.” He is much more fundamentally concerned as all his work shows with metamorphosis.

When the father of Peter, Martin, and Jack in *A Tale of a Tub* leaves the lads three coats as a legacy he tells them that the coats have two virtues: first, with good wearing the coats will last fresh and new as long as the boys live; secondly, they will grow in the same proportions as their bodies, lengthening and widening of themselves. The parable of the coats and their retailoring is amplified by the digressions into a commentary, made comprehensible by the current analogy between the Book of Nature and Holy Scripture, on those projectors who felt it necessary to “devest themselves of many vain conceptions, and overcome a thousand false images” which lay like monsters in their way.

There is no doubt that some of Swift’s repeated references to clothes are a response to the Royal Society’s emphasis on primitive purity and the naked truth. “They have exacted from their members,” Spratt wrote of the Royal Society, “a close naked natural way of speaking; positive expressions, clear senses; a native easiness: bringing all things as near the Mathematical plainness as they can.” As Swift suggests the “converting Imagination” which disposes some “to reduce all things into *Types*” can easily refine “what is literal into Figure and Mystery.” Universal stripping and patching do not answer man’s needs as the plight of Jack shows; for “it is the Nature of Rags to bear a kind of mock Resemblance to Finery; there being a sort of fluttering Appearance in both, which is not to be distinguished at a Distance, in the Dark, or by short-sighted Eyes. . . . So in these junctures, it fared with Jack and his Tatters, that they offered to the first view a ridiculous Flanting which assisting the Resemblance in Person and Air, thwarted all his Projects of Separation.”

If what is “vulgarly called Suits of Cloathes” can deceive the world, or if “certain Ermins and Furs” or “Conjunction of Lawn and black Sattin” can operate as an extension of power, a tool, or a weapon, so, Swift observes, can a beggar’s rags. At the end of a pamphlet *A Proposal for Giving Badges to the Beggars in All the Parishes of Dublin* Swift, with less emotional concern about clothes and the visual status they confer, and with a clearer understanding of the operation of power in all its manifestations than Carlyle, observes candidly that beggars in general “do not much regard Cloathes, unless to sell them; for their Rags are Part of their Tools with which they work.”

In the first of the Drapier’s letters Swift speaks of clothing as a necessity threatened by the ruinous extension of private power over a whole nation under the mask of the king’s stamped face.

What I intend now to say to you, is, next to your Duty to God, and the Care of your Salvation, of the greatest Concern to your selves, and your Children; your *Bread* and *Cloathing*, and every common Necessary of Life entirely depend upon it.

From the concept of clothes as necessary protection Swift moves quickly to the image of clothing as offensive weaponry:

And I may say . . . that [Wood] resembles *Goliah* in many Circumstances very applicable to the present Purpose: For *Goliah* had a *Helmet of BRASS upon his Head*, and he was armed with a *Coat of Mail*, and the *Weight of the Coat was five Thousand Shekles of BRASS*, and he had *Greaves of BRASS upon his Legs*, and a *Target of BRASS between his Shoulders*. In Short, he was like Mr. Wood all over BRASS; and he defied the Armies of the living God.

Later in *An Humble Address to Parliament* the Drapier observes that the clothing of one thing may mean the destruction of another. He deplores the cutting of turf without any regularity so that the cattle are destroyed and land made marshy, stagnant, and repulsive to the sight by the “flaying off the green Surface of the Ground” to cover cabins. Because of the custom of cutting scraws in this way “many Skirts of Boggs, which have a green Coat of Grass” are carelessly mangled. So too, Swift says elsewhere, the critics flay living works so that they can embellish their own thought with flowers of rhetoric.

The references to clothing in *Gulliver's Travels* are as numerous and important as they are not only in *The Drapier's Letters* but also in *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Battle of the Books* in both of which Swift is concerned with the book as garment and extension of thought. In *Gulliver's Travels*, however, Swift concentrates his attention on the ritual function of clothing as it separates, transforms, or incorporates.

In Lilliput, Gulliver, whose own leather jerkin might have protected him for the nine months and thirteen days of his residence there, is invested in a suit quilted together from the Lilliputians' short and narrow pieces in such a way that it looks like the patchwork made by ladies in England, only all of one colour. The transformation of essence, however, which begins when Gulliver is chained like a dog to the polluted temple in Lilliput, is confirmed in Brobdingnag by the donning of mouseskin breeches as well as by enclosure in a portable cage. In Laputa the tailors make Gulliver a mathematical suit which effects no change before his pathos because it fails to conform in any way to the contours of his body. His final predicament we have already examined.

Although much has been said about Swift's references to excrement this motif has not been associated with his repeated references to the pelts and hides of things. The general connection between the two motifs is suggested by Plutarch's comment on the linen clothing of the priests of Isis, who refrained from wearing wool, shaved their heads, and ritually pared their nails from fear of pollution by excrementious substances. Carlyle's choice of the name Teuflesdröckh or Devil's dung as the original name Teuflesdreck makes explicit signals a romantic turning on the same theme.

Carlyle is, in fact, less interested in the protective function of clothing or significant formal extension than he is in the pathology of “shrivelled” pelts or

"fast-rotting" raw-hide. It is not surprising that at the outset of *Sartor Resartus* he should recall the name of the French physician Bichat whose *Treatise on Membranes* (1799–1800) brought histology to the service of pathology. Much of *Sartor Resartus* is a necropsy of a society which manifests itself visually to Carlyle as a mass of diseased tissue. Everywhere his eye is confronted by "hateful empty Masks, full of beetles and spiders," clerical aprons, exhibitionist clothes-screens, and the intolerable garments of established authority. Vested interests "are all hooked and buttoned together, and held up by clothes."

Teufelsdröckh in contrast presents himself in "loose ill-brushed threadbare habiliments." In his black moments he sees the "Clothes flying off the whole dramatic corps; and Dukes, Grandees, Bishops, Anointed Presence itself . . . straddling there." He tries to convince himself that the clothes he sees and has been taught to reverence are now either exuviae, "Cast Clothes," or mere pods and husks which mask some shrivelled or diseased truth. Excluded from the great world of clothes, isolated, and oppressed with guilt, however, he feels that these symbols are really reservoirs of power which must be released, and will be released inevitably by the operation of time, for some total transformation over which he himself will preside. He feels that the world is his oyster, but the shell remains obstinately shut. In the invested world "to be weak [*unkräftig*] is true misery." From the point of view of the dispossessed clothes appear to him as "the manifold cunning victory over want." Clothing for him is never iconic. Clothes like books are tools or weapons. There is hope even for the rags thrown into the Laystall which, after being "macerated, hot-pressed, printed on" can circulate in "larger or smaller circles" through the Chaos of life.

Conditioned as he is by the analogy between the printed Bible and the Book of Nature, Carlyle, under the impact of the popular press, and the printing of "news" which (to negate Ezra Pound's phrase) does not "stay news," senses almost imperceptibly that for the time being the only possible role for the artist is to become editor or tailor's patcher. In accordance with his sense of social justice, however, he is forced to postulate a period of waiting not unlike that to which Sorel, after him, was to give the name of General Strike.

The desire to burn, to shatter, to destroy comes from a confusion of the iconic with the mechanical permanence or death suggested by the forms of print. Unlike Swift, Carlyle has no sense that the garment, like skin, will lengthen and widen itself. In his actual understanding he has advanced no further than the Lilliputians. There must be, he is convinced, a divesting, a burning of almost all the innumerable "stript-off Garments," a provisional quilting together of the sounder rags into a huge watch-coat for the period of waiting during which the new organic filaments spin themselves "even as the ashes of the Old are blown about."

Attention at this moment fixes on the new electric media. The image of the "electric Battery" becomes central. In terms of movement, change is seen as the passage through "the centre of indifference" from the negative to the positive pole. Although Carlyle dwells on the crisis during which Teuflesdröckh rejects the devil and the whole Satanic School among the civic rubbish in the *Rue Saint-Thomas de l'enfer* and although he rejects "Witchcraft and all manner of Spectre-work" as madness and disease of the nerves, yet he admits that the "soul" must descend into "a world of internal Madness," into "an authentic Demon-Empire" in order to create. The region of poetic creation and palinogenesis "where the Phoenix Death-Birth of Human Society and all Human things seem possible" in a "Nether Chaotic Deep" is an electric field.

It is a labyrinth of power. And there, like T. S. Eliot's Sweeney, we find Carlyle's heroic self in the person of Teuflesdröckh, one of "the inspired (speaking and acting) Texts of the DIVINE BOOK OF REVELATION," guarding the Horn-gate. In casting what is virtually an expressionist drama depending for its action on a doctrine of *Thatkraft* or active power translated into a theory of work, Carlyle almost automatically chooses for his pragmatic as opposed to his heroic spiritual self the role of regulator or editor. As a compound figure he belongs by anticipation to the family of Valéry's Faust.

As editor he contents himself during the period of disintegration with patching together and shaping into a whole the fragmented biography of the hero. Teuflesdröckh's foot meanwhile is on the treadle in the *néant*, the place of symbolic genesis. He is at work in the flux of undifferentiated power loosed by the breaking of previous moulds and fed by the forces of Chaos and Ancient Night. It is somewhere in this nowhere and sometime in this no-when, in the region of things-in-general of which Teuflesdröckh has been appointed professor, that the spinning begins again.

It is to be noted that Teuflesdröckh's genesis is his exodus from the basket of the stranger. In the idyllic garden of his foster father he is seen already spelling out the alphabet of the Book of Nature and rejoicing in the possession of his first tools. Reading print seems to him the natural function of sight. The things of the world shrink to the thinness of paper. Only naked power has any reality. It is out of this impoverishment that Carlyle's own iconoclastic fury is born. All his models—cosmological and social—are technomorphic. Although the emergence of the new electric technology revives, with what appears to be demonic importunity the older iconic forms, Carlyle can confront these merely on his own terms. Indeed he seems less a prophet, as he is often called, than a symptom of the disorder to which Swift called attention in *A Tale of a Tub*.

THE VISUAL UNSEEN

HARLEY W. PARKER

"The effect is the thing that counts, not the sensuous facts"—

Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*

Notes toward a grammar of presentation for museums

The area of testing audience reaction to design solutions in the museum is a relatively untouched field. This is not to suggest that the design solutions in other areas of our life are in much better shape. We simply do not have a grammar of presentation. When a museum hires a designer, it is usually on the assumption that he will add certain elements of good taste to the presentation, even though there is no proof that such an addition is useful in terms of communication. The contemporary awareness of the ways in which techniques of communication structure audience responses could well be enhanced by the accumulation of scientifically verified data. This would undoubtedly result in an appreciation of museum presentation as a unique art form. As Herbert Bayer says in the preface to *Exhibitions and Displays* by Erberto Carboni: "If we review the plastic arts as mediums of communication we find them, in a traditional sense, limited to certain accepted rules. Experimental thinking has in some instances broken through these barriers but even architecture, often looked upon as the synthesis of all plastic arts, is confined to a more or less rigid framework of principles. In the design of exhibitions, there has evolved during the last thirty years, often springing from architecture, more often though from painting and the graphic arts, a new discipline. The universal application of all available plastic means, more than anything else, makes exhibition design into an intensified and new modern language."

In these notes I intend to discuss various concepts pertinent to the organization of a grammar of presentation. That this cannot be a definitive discussion will become apparent as we begin to survey the multiple implications of the field. My attempt therefore is to find an approach rather than a solution.

Good design is good communication. This statement stresses rejection of the idea that art is a decorative element imposed on the already functioning unit. The very concept of the decorative as it existed up to the end of the nineteenth century is a misapprehension based on the visual, literary bias—the lineal storytelling concept of the Renaissance. It was at this time that the dualism between Fine and Applied Art was born. The considerably less fragmented Middle Ages had little tendency to create differences where none existed, at least in the sister arts of book illustration and decoration, for as David Bland points out in

a *History of Book Illustration*: "In the medieval mind, however, it may be doubted whether there was any distinction between the two." However, as the Middle Ages died, the inevitable differences exposed under the specialist bias of the Renaissance was, of course, interpreted solely in Renaissance terms. The decorative, the two-dimensional, was relegated to a role of relative non-communication solely because its data about the world did not correspond to visual reality. That this dichotomy between the world as it is known synesthetically and as it is understood visually, did exist, is proven by the fact that we still stress this split in our traditionally organized art schools where painting and design are carried on with little or no liaison between them. The contemporary art schools, in too many instances, still do not understand that the trend of the twentieth century is away from the eye in isolation and toward a unification of sensibilities with a concomitant stress upon the communicative abilities of the formal or structural factors of art.

It is important to note that we must always examine any *a priori* concepts which we bring to design problems so as to recognize when they are merely our cultural *appliqués*—habitual responses to badly understood problems. That so many people today regard the designer as the man who ties the ribbons on the already packaged gift is due to the fragmentation of a unified artistic understanding, generated by print technology, and the application of this fragmented point of view in so many of our industries where the "stylists" decorate the designs of the engineers. An architect recently told me that there is a very strong feeling abroad in his profession that there is a necessity for a much closer liaison between architects and engineers. In fact, he went so far as to say that we should stop producing architects and engineers and start to produce "Master Builders"—a remark startlingly evocative of the Middle Ages.

In design for scientific purposes the above dichotomy does not exist. Can it be that the reason for the successful use of designers is that some of the techniques of science rub off on them? The designer in such a situation is forced to add to his artistic and intuitive grasp that understanding which is based on proven empirical data. While the essence of science is the repeatable experiment, in most areas of design there is insufficient data available for the designer to predict success or failure. It would seem that the sooner we arrive at measurable data for design and planning, the sooner we will be able to use designers intelligently for the creation of environments which are conducive to the proper development of man. I hasten to forestall the objection that design cannot be wholly dependent upon measurable data by pointing out that no artist has ever been limited by a knowledge of the efficacy of his approach or his tools. Furthermore, the designer will never be in a position of having sufficient data. His every insight will merely open up new horizons, the understanding of

which will demand more data. There will always be the need for the intuitive grasp.

I believe that one of the primary errors made in the course of the formulation of exhibition design is to consider that communication via the printed word takes precedence over that engendered by the design of the presentation. Or, to put it another way, the design elements are merely expected to fortify the verbal exposition. Today, both written exposition, with its essentially linear structure, and contemporary design, which is essentially nuclear in structure, must work together. It can be expected that each will modify the other. For example, in a design format where the all-at-onceness of tribal organization was stressed one would expect to see this idea recognized, not only in terms of label content, but in the very syntax of the copy. It is only by such a tight intermeshing of disciplines that we can hope to communicate successfully.

In the museum world the failure to arrive at a working relationship between the designer and the scholar often results in the latter taking over the designer's role. The scholar feels that he must control the design in order to prevent it modifying what he wishes to say. All too often he backs himself into the corner of mediocrity and, at the best, good taste. With the scholar's training in lineal exposition he tends to impose this mode upon the organization. He does this even though it is quite evident to anyone who appreciates contemporary art that non-verbal modes of exposition today depend on immediate all-inclusive involvement of the senses of the audience rather than on the lineal repetitive mode which tends to put the audience in a very passive role.

Marshall McLuhan has said: "The content of any medium is another medium". Speech, for example, is the content of writing. The content of museum presentation is a series of other cultures or a variety of scientific disciplines, but it contains many other media as content: writing, telephone, radio, movies, pictures, the sculptural media via the tactility of surfaces, etc. With multi-media as content of museum presentation, it becomes obvious that the *rationale* of any one of them is not only inadequate but so limiting as to be crippling. Any single medium as well as presenting us with information about our world is also a channel for our perceptions. Under the impact of any particular medium we find ourselves structuring our world within the confines of the sensory limitations of the medium. Any medium imposes its own assumptions, and so it is understandable that educated people, with their literary bias, in our society fail to comprehend that the sequential method of exposition is not the only possible or desirable one. The complete grip of the rationale of visual organization is understandable in the Renaissance, but today, because of the constant shift in methods of exposition, we find ourselves in a position to understand the assumptions of media and cultures which do not constitute our own environ-

ment. By moving into another method of exposition we find ourselves with a vantage point which allows us to overlook the assumptions of other media. We must understand that speech as the content of radio, for example, is not the same as speech as the content of writing. This in turn must prepare us for the idea that the written word as part of the contents of museum presentation is not the same as writing as content of book. I would hesitate to define exactly what form writing in museum presentation should take. I feel that it would take many forms depending upon the particular type of presentation. I realize that the type of organization of the written material should take its cue from the design, which in turn takes its cue from the assumptions of the medium, the quality of the audience, and the particular theme.

Museum presentation has been with us, essentially in its present form since the Pinacotheca (a marble hall of the propylaeum on the Athens Acropolis) although the first really modern museum was the British Museum established in 1753. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, however, we have had introduced into our society various methods of communication each of which imposes its own assumptions and therefore creates its own method of organizing data. That we are now able to see past these assumptions to some extent and come to grips with the diverse re-structuring possibilities of media is due to our ability to shift from one medium to another. As well, we must consider the effect of the interpenetration of cultures. For interpenetration also discloses the different assumptions of media. It is amazing, for example, how much insight that we obtained when we first presented movies to illiterate natives. We discovered, for example, that natives, because of a culturally built inability to focus slightly in front of the screen have to scan each picture. As the change of image is so rapid they have barely begun to examine one picture before it has radically changed. We discovered that the ability to see and understand movies is a learned process. The point I am trying to make is that we cannot afford to impose the assumptions of any medium onto a method of communication, for museum presentation, which is essentially of a unique kind.

Museum presentation constitutes a medium just as unique as any other, and is one that demands a knowledge of the assumptions of many other media. That we still search for the answers as I am doing in these notes is a commentary on our desperate need for help from many disciplines, and concomitantly, the need for individuals trained in the orchestration of many modes of sensory communication.

Knowledge of the impact of design solutions upon the audience would provide the designer with an opportunity to fly freer and further—to confront his audience with ever-more satisfactory and imaginative solutions. There is an increasing need in our society to provide designers with an opportunity to test

designs in their full social effects. It is interesting to note that painting in the twentieth century, because of its low cost, has done a great deal of psychic and social experimenting and probing even when there was no foreseeable use for the results. The alacrity with which many of these design experiments have been incorporated into the vocabulary of "the hucksters" however is sufficient comment on their efficacy. The ephemeral qualities of advertising makes it unnecessary for that industry to find long term design solutions. Advertising in its need to discover and to sell "dreams that money can buy" is in a very different situation from the museums. As A. E. Parr has noted in *Curator*: "When we design in order to teach, our goal is not to achieve a hypnotic suspension of judgment, but, on the contrary, to alert the critical faculties and to awaken the independent inquisitiveness of our public. All the work that has been done on how to persuade without having to convince is without application to the educational process, except as a warning of dangers to avoid". Yet I feel that it is absolutely necessary that museums avail themselves of some of the new techniques even if museums are trying to sell a concept of society which does not coincide with the advertising world's mirage.

In education it is always a moot point to what extent one can sweeten material in order to make it acceptable, but I would suggest that the intelligent use of techniques of advertising, trade fairs, expositions, etc., is not so much a sweetening as it is an attempt to present a product in a manner which will extend the awareness of a contemporary audience. Whether we like it or not, we have to accept the fact that the mind of the audience is constantly being re-structured by the environment of advertising, and if we want to contact that audience we must broadcast on the same wave length. At this point I almost expect to hear my readers say: "That may be true of most people but it isn't true of me". To this my answer can only be that such a response indicates a lack of understanding of the structuring capacity of the media. In a society that communicates primarily by the book, all men are literate whether or not they can read or write. They are literate in the sense that they are moulded by a world which reflects exactly and specifically that type of organization which print generates. The same thing is true where the world and our minds are constantly being re-made by advertising and the ubiquitous tv "eye". In fact, the man who says "Advertising doesn't affect me" is a beautiful example of the person who has been attacked subliminally.

Consciousness is the result of interaction between man and his environment, each modifying the other. As long as the environment with which man interacts is cacophonous, ugly and unintelligible, so long will the development of the human being be retarded. The fact that the most intelligent designing, the most cogent planning, is devoted to hurling man off the face of this planet is a covert

comment on our disordered existence. Until we accept art (or design) as a communication process which is concerned with making life, all life from the mundane to the spiritual, understandable and concomitantly more fruitful, then we face life with a dichotomy between living and creating. Commenting on the dichotomy between art and life, Raymond Williams in *The Long Revolution* says: "When this (the traditional definition of art) was extended to a contrast between art and ordinary experience the consequences were very damaging. In modern industrial societies, particularly, it came to be felt that art would be lost unless it was given this special status, but the height of the claim ran parallel with a wide-spread practical rejection and exclusion. So powerful has been the tendency to exclude art from serious practical concerns, that, in a natural mood of defence, the claim that art is special and extraordinary has been urgent and even desperate; even to question this produces reactions of extreme violence, from those who are convinced that they are the sole defenders of art in a hostile world. The suggestion that art and culture are ordinary provokes quite hysterical denials, although, with every claim that they are essentially extra-ordinary, the exclusion and hostility that are complained of are in practice reinforced". Here we encounter the paradox that those who are most concerned with the survival of art are doing it a disservice by defending its special nature. This is, of course, understandable when one recognizes that it is usually the educated who rise to the defence of the arts, and the educated in our society unfortunately are too often the believers in fragmented specialism.

It is interesting in the light of the quotation from *The Long Revolution* to take a look at *Painting and Reality* by Etienne Gilson where he says: "It is often said that since the museum is a civic institution, its existence is justified to the extent that it serves the needs of the people. And nothing can be truer; but this is precisely the reason that, in the case of painting, the more they are concerned with education, the less museums are concerned with art". Gilson in his excellent book is "taking a swipe" at the growing aggressiveness of the disciplines of language, and therefore at the educational system which does not understand the function of painting. Nevertheless, with all his sensitive appreciation of the dichotomy which currently exists between the appreciation of art and the assimilation of data, I believe that it is necessary to go beyond that appreciation and try to discover those factors which will tend to end the polarity.

Design must be recognized, not as a peripheral benefit derived from the society but rather as an integral part of the social process. Any analysis of design separate from the social organism deprives the organism of one of its constituent parts that is most vital to its unity. Analysis of the effect of design in the society becomes impossible. Objective information on the function of design *in* the society rather than the relationship *to* the society is our interest.

That form follows function is to me axiomatic, but function must be understood as much more than just a properly working unit. It must be considered whether the job the instrument is doing is worthwhile in terms of a broader appreciation—in terms of the whole community of operating units of which it is a part. Its value must be appraised in psychological as well as physiological or physiological-mechanical terms. A house is not necessarily well designed because people live in it in a manner that conforms to the pattern of the community. The community itself could undoubtedly bear analysis. It is true that it is seldom that any one gets an opportunity to design a community, but even one good design injected into a complex of ill-conceived units can have its regenerative pervasive effect, providing its impact on the over-all pattern has been properly considered. For, a community, in terms of its function, is not like a chain in which it would be useless to strengthen an individual link; rather it is like a biological organism in which any strong part adds vitality to the whole.

Too few people who work in museums regard museum presentation as a medium, but it is just as unique in its way as the book or the movie. If we accept it as a medium, however, we also have to accept the fact that it will govern *what* can be said because it governs *how* it can be said. This impact of forms upon content we have all encountered in our everyday speech as we search for a method of expressing some experience. Quite often we discover that our expression has enriched our original idea. The form has so vitalized the facts that we sometimes wonder whether we could have said it. In other words, it turns out to be richer, more provocative, more perceptive than the mere content as we originally thought of it. This might be the result of the rhythms of speech, alliteration or any one of a dozen different factors of the art of talking. At the risk of belabouring a point which may be obvious, it must be pointed out that the audience does not separate content from form (an impossibility at any rate); it accepts the presentation as an indivisible whole. Further, because it does not make this separation, it accepts any given statement as true within the total dynamic situation. Isolated facts only have validity within a framework of a known cultural situation.

The awareness that form modifies content should have created a growing concern for a definitive syntax of presentation. In too many instances in the museum world, however, it has resulted in an attempt to return to the older method of exposition, the book. The fact that so many exhibitions are organized around the labels is an indictment of our inability to cope with the real problem of the museum which is the intelligent display of artifacts and specimens.

Museum presentation can, and quite often does, use sight, sound and touch all coupled to kinesthetic as well as visual and acoustic space. Although a single,

unique medium characterized by the fact that it uses three-dimensional objects, it quite often uses other media such as slides, movies, tape recorders, the printed word and so on. Each of these media must be examined separately in terms of its contribution to the over-all unity. Movies, for example, cannot merely be added because they give additional information. It must be remembered that the movie and electronic media are anachronisms in the presentation of any material originating prior to the twentieth century. We add complexity to complexity when we place in the museum, which is already a clash of multiple cultures, media which were born of twentieth century technology. This is not to suggest that they should not be used but rather that they must be used with an awareness of their effect upon the sense responses of the audience.

If we hark back to the quotation with which I started: "The effect is the thing that counts, not the sensuous facts", then we find our thoughts directed towards the idea of audience testing. For without audience testing we cannot know these "effects".

In order to arrive at any complete program for testing audience reaction in museums it is necessary that we bring together teams of widely divergent disciplines. It would certainly, for example, require psychologists, social workers, designers, architects, medical doctors, psychiatrists, specialists in linguistics, as well as the many specialists on various cultures and sciences who already work in museums.

In our world of total involvement via the globe-embracing extensions of communications, the role of the passive observer is becoming increasingly less pertinent. Fragmented expertise which is the function of the uninvolved observer probably reached its end with the realization of the physicists that the very act of observation produced changes in the observed. Everywhere there is feed-back. In other words, specialization can only exist coincidentally with the belief that communication is a one-way process. The realization that this is not true inevitably results in an increasing awareness of consciousness as response to field rather than to line. By insistence on lineal development of thought in presentation techniques we can depress the level of involvement and therefore the ability of the data to assume its own structure. It is interesting to note here that the ability of any medium to impose its own assumptions finds its exact equivalent in primitive art where each object creates its own space instead of merely occupying a pre-structured space as in the Renaissance concept of pictured three-dimensions. It is not necessary, however, to study primitive modes of organization to find parallels to our current awareness of the media's ability to create its own structures. It is, of course, inherent in the field implications of today's electronic extensions. The contemporary artist's concern with pre-literate modes is a logical response for a man who also lives in a world of simultaneity.